



Nine Steps Toward a Softer Playground

Use this checklist to inspect your local school or community playground. If you mark items with a "X," ask the proper school or park official to correct these hazards immediately- - before injuries occur.

- ☐ **Netting and Rope Equipment** - Check all netting and rope equipment for tears and frays to avoid tripping and/or head entrapment. Torn netting could allow a child to climb onto the outer portions of the equipment and fall onto a hard surface.
- ☐ **Protective Surfacing** - The surfacing under and around playground equipment, such as floor mats, should be placed tightly together and checked for tears. Torn surfacing could cause trips and ankle sprains.
- ☐ **Entrance Paths** - All entrance paths and walkways to a playground should be cleared to prevent tripping hazards.
- ☐ **Equipment Upkeep** - Equipment should be routinely checked for cleanliness. Dirty equipment is an indication that the playground is not being properly maintained.
- ☐ **Obey All Signs** - Guidelines to a soft play unit should be posted throughout the playground and followed.
- ☐ **Obey Size and Age Recommendations** - Keep toddlers out of the older children's section and keep older children out of the toddler's section to prevent collisions and rougher play.
- ☐ **Clothing Check** - Before entering a play space, remove any jewelry or clothing accessories that could catch in equipment such as loose hanging strings, necklaces and earrings.
- ☐ **Encourage Rapid Exits** - Keep children away from the base of sliding boards, climbing equipment, and ball pools. Children like to bury themselves under the balls in a ball pool. A mountain climb or slide exit into a ball pool could cause the child playing in the pool to be struck.
- ☐ **Encourage Proper Usage of Equipment** - Follow all rules and instructions when using equipment. Do not allow children to climb up a slide as they could be struck by a child coming down the slide.